

What is claimed is:

1. A method for remotely configuring a bonus game operating on a gaming machine of a type having a base game display area and a bonus game display area, the method comprising:

selecting at a configuration workstation coupled to the gaming machine over a network at least one of a plurality of criteria displayed in a list to thereby define a bonus promotion rule, said rule including at least a triggering criterion;

10 propagating the rule throughout the network to at least the gaming machine and storing the rule on the gaming machine; and

operating the gaming machine in accordance with the stored bonus promotion rule including triggering the operation of a bonus game on the bonus game display area according to the triggering criterion.

15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the triggering criterion requires multiple game outcomes, said method further including:

identifying a player of the gaming machine by player interaction with the gaming machine; and

20 tracking play of the identified player on the base game of the gaming machine and compiling outcomes at the gaming machine for that identified player, said triggering criterion operating to trigger the bonus game according to the bonus promotion rule when the compiled outcomes matches the triggering criterion.

25 3. The method of claim 2, wherein identifying the player includes receiving player identification at the gaming machine, transmitting the player identification number through the network to a player database, and retrieving from the player database a player record corresponding to the player identification number

30 4. The method of claim 3, further including receiving a player identification card within a reader at the gaming machine to retrieve a player identification number.

5. The method of claim 3, further including manually entering a player identification number at the gaming machine.

6. The method of claim 2, wherein said triggering criterion is based upon a set of game outcomes.

7. The method of claim 2, wherein said triggering criterion is based upon 5 consecutive game outcomes.

8. The method of claim 2, wherein said triggering criterion is based X outcomes in N tries.

10 9. The method of claim 2, wherein said triggering criterion is based upon a set of game outcomes within a set period of time.

10. The method of claim 2, wherein said triggering criterion is based upon a certain number of points earned by the player.

15 11. The method of claim 2, wherein said triggering criterion is based upon a number of wins/loses over a set time period.

20 12. The method of claim 2, wherein said triggering criterion is based upon visitation frequency.

13. The method of claim 2, wherein said triggering criterion is based upon player demographics.

25 14. The method of claim 1, wherein the rule includes a plurality of triggering criteria and wherein the bonus game is triggered responsive to any one of the plurality of triggering criteria.

30 15. The method of claim 1, wherein the rule includes a plurality of triggering criteria and wherein the bonus game is triggered responsive only to all of the plurality of triggering criteria being fulfilled.

16. The method of claim 1, the network further including a plurality of gaming machines where each of the plurality of gaming machines is associated with one or more

gaming machine groups, and at least one of the groups is selected at the configuration workstation to which the bonus promotion rule applies so that the bonus promotion defined by the bonus promotion rule and operable on the bonus display area of each of the gaming machines is potentially triggered only on gaming machines within the selected group and not on 5 gaming machines not within the selected group.

17. The method of claim 1, the promotion rule further including an interface criterion associated with a series of steps operable by the gaming machine processor to complete a given promotion.

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18. The method of claim 17, the interface criterion designating that a single animation sequence be displayed on the gaming machine after which a bonus amount is awarded to the player.

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19. The method of claim 18, the interface criterion designating that the player be required to interact with the gaming machine in order to start or stop the animation sequence.

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20. The method of claim 17, the interface criterion designating that a series of animations be displayed on the gaming machine after which a bonus amount is awarded to the player.

21. The method of claim 20, the interface criterion designating that the player be required to interact with the gaming machine between each animation in the series.

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22. The method of claim 21, the interface criterion designating that X number of possible selection areas be displayed to the player and requiring the player to pick N items.

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23. The method of claim 21, the interface criterion designating that X number of possible selection areas be displayed to the player and requiring the player to pick N items or until a stop is chosen whichever comes earlier.

24. The method of claim 21, the interface criterion designating that X number of possible selection areas be displayed to the player and requiring the player to pick selection areas to review items associated with respective selection areas until a match occurs.

25. The method of claim 24, the bonus award associated with the match being decremented as the number of attempts to make a match increases.

5 26. The method of claim 17, the interface criterion designating that a player choose to take a first bonus award or risk the amount for a second bonus award.

27. The method of claim 26, the first and second bonus award comprising a plurality of items chosen in a series of selection steps.

10 28. The method of claim 21, the interface criterion designating that the player uncovers an image tile by tile in successive bonus rounds until the image is uncovered.

29. The method of claim 1, the promotion rule further including an award method defining the bonus game outcome.

15 30. The method of claim 29, wherein the award method designates that a random number be chosen based upon a probability table designating the item of value awarded in the bonus promotion.

20 31. The method of claim 29, wherein the award method designates that a random number be chosen based upon a probability table designating the item of value awarded in the bonus promotion wherein the item of value is awarded over a series of sessions that add up to the total value.

25 32. The method of claim 1, the promotion rule further including a currency criterion designating the item of value awarded to the player.

30 33. The method of claim 1, wherein the currency criterion is one selected from the group consisting of complementary goods and services, cash back, points, extra credit, promotional credits, and discount coupons.

34. A method for remotely configuring a gaming machine over a network from a configuration computer, the method comprising:

operating a bonus configuration program on a configuration computer remote from the gaming machine, the configuration program including a rule generator comprising a plurality of selectable bonus promotion criteria;

- allowing one or more of the bonus promotion criteria to be selected and causing the one or more selected criteria to be transmitted over the network to the gaming machine; and
- receiving the one or more selected criteria at the gaming machine and configuring the gaming machine according to the selected criteria.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein the type of criteria to be selected within the configuration program includes at least one or more of the following types: machine selection, triggers, interface, award, and currency.

36. The method of claim 34, wherein the type of criteria to be selected within the configuration program includes at least two or more of the following types: machine selection, triggers, interface, award, and currency.

37. The method of claim 34, wherein the type of criteria to be selected within the configuration program includes the following types: machine selection, triggers, interface, award, and currency.

20 38. The method of claim 34, wherein one of the selected criteria includes one or more defined triggering events, the method further including:

- allowing play on the gaming machine; and
- triggering a bonus game on the gaming machine responsive to play on the gaming machine matching one of the defined triggering events.

39. The method of claim 34, wherein one of the selected criteria includes a plurality of defined triggering events, the method further including:

- allowing play on the gaming machine; and
- triggering a bonus game on the gaming machine responsive to play on the gaming machine matching the defined triggering events.

40. The method of claim 34, further including:
identifying a player of the gaming machine;

triggering a bonus game on the gaming machine responsive to play by the identified player on the gaming machine according to the defined triggering events.

41. A method for configuring a gaming machine of a type coupled to a network and
5 having a base game and a bonus game, the method comprising:

operating a configuration computer on a network remote from a gaming machine, the configuration computer having a configuration program operating thereon;

10 selecting at the configuration computer one or more of bonus promotion criteria presented by the configuration program, said one or more selected criteria comprising a bonus rule associated with the gaming machine; and

operating the gaming machine according to the rule.

42. The method of claim 41, further including the steps of:

transmitting the bonus rule over the network to the gaming machine; and

15 storing the bonus rule on the gaming machine and triggering the bonus game when play on the gaming machine matches the bonus rule stored on the machine.

43. A gaming machine coupled to a network and controlled by a processor and a memory in response to a wager, comprising a special feature indicated on a visual display, the 20 visual display depicting a bonus event triggered responsive to a bonus rule received over a network and stored in memory.

44. The gaming machine of claim 43, wherein the visual display is a video display separated from a display of a base game operating on the gaming machine.

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